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# NEWS
## FROM YOUR MUSEUM
THE ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM

*Know your Museum better*

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## FOSSILS CLUE TO OIL WELLS

In the quest for oil, that much coveted natural resource, many of us associate elaborate drilling outfits. Others may think of doodlebugs, mechanical devices used to locate the subsurface reservoirs. Few probably realize that tiny fossils, some microscopic in size, often hold the key to Nature's treasure-trove.

Among these ancient forms of life, specimens of which may be seen at the Royal Ontario Museum, are unicellular animals known as "foraminifera". Each particular type lived at a definite time in the ancient seas of geological history. Thus they serve to date the rocks in which they are now found. Examples of these fossils are common in well samples brought to the surface by drilling. The age of each sample can be determined by a study of its fossils.

It often happens that in a given field oil is associated with certain fossil species. Drillers elsewhere may be working in a region where the structural features are favorable for the accumulation and trapping of oil. They will in most cases have high hopes of striking oil in this latter field if they find there fossils known to be associated with oil and gas.

### YESTERDAY AND TO-MORROW

Reconstruction, rehabilitation and plans for the life of to-morrow are appealing to the imagination now. In marching forward, a backward glance over the shoulder is often helpful. How much do you know of the life of yesterday? See the many exhibits at the Royal Ontario Museum.

### THE RETURNS OF SPRING

The month of April promises two certainties—taxes and migrant birds. Let's discuss the latter. Whether you have noticed it or not, the crow, robin, song sparrow, bluebird, redwing, meadowlark, etc., have returned from the south by now. Several other familiar birds are due this month, according to ornithologists of the Royal Ontario Museum. The flicker, that white-rumped, golden-winged woodpecker, will be among the first if he has not already arrived. Also, the kingfisher will resume his patrol of river and creek and it will be good again to hear his voice clattering like an air-raid warden's rattle. Two of the more intimate dooryard birds which arrive in April are the modest, slender chipping sparrow and the barn swallow. Surely every farmer will find it pleasant to see the familiar forms of swallows sweep in and out through his barn doorway. And just about the tax-due date, the bubbling song of the bustling house wren will be heard again in city and country garden. Do you suppose the Department of Internal Revenue has seen through all this and planned accordingly?

### CHINESE PUZZLE

What looks like a bear, is related to the raccoons, and eats bamboo? The answer is to be found in one of the exhibits of the Royal Ontario Museum. It is the Giant Panda, found in the mountain country of western China.

## DIAMOND FOR APRIL

No gem is surrounded with more charm than is the aristocratic diamond—the birthstone for April. Diamond, the hardest natural substance known, is composed of pure carbon. Strangely enough, that is exactly the composition of the graphite you use in your pencil, one of the softest natural substances. Diamonds vary somewhat in colour. A trace of blue or green makes them no less valuable. Any tinge of yellow or brown, however, detracts considerably from their worth. Black diamonds are used industrially as the cutting tip of drills, etc.

Although diamonds are among the younger of gems, they have played their part in war, murder and assassination. Many of the famous large stones have incredibly thrilling and romantic histories. Superstitions in regard to diamonds were less numerous than those connected with the older stones. They were, however, supposed to prevent the plague. There was also a belief that the spirit within the stone was offended if acquired by purchase.

Professor A. L. Parsons at the Royal Ontario Museum tells us that diamonds have not as yet been found in Canada, although some day they may be. Only the tiniest crystals have ever been produced synthetically.

### NOVEL MENU NOT NEW

Suppose you sat down to a dinner consisting of tomato cocktail followed by lima bean soup. Next come roast turkey, sweet potatoes, scalloped potatoes, baked squash, stewed corn, and trimmings such as pepper jelly, guava jelly and chili sauce. After the inclusion of an alligator pear salad, let's top it off with fresh pineapple, maple syrup or vanilla tapioca pudding, and cocoa or mate, peanuts, pecans and brazils.

If you are still interested in food, you may like to know that all of the items on the menu, and many more, are strictly of New World origin. A visit to the Royal Ontario Museum will disclose that many of these items were prepared by American Indians. Their recipes were different from ours, but the articles are the same. The menu given above is in a sense borrowed from the Indians of the Southwest, from the Iroquois group, and from natives of Peru. It is novel but not new.

### GIANT "FROGS" NOW EXTINCT

With the coming of spring and warmer weather many of the dormant animals take a new lease on life. One of these, *Rana*, the frog, our most familiar amphibian, once again croaks his well-known song. In his swampy home he reenacts to some extent the life of his ancestors. Among these ancestors were the grotesquely huge amphibians that lived in a bygone era many millions of years ago. In the Royal Ontario Museum may be seen examples of these animals in fossil form. A glance at these fossils reveals a head two feet or more long, the total length of the animal being often over six feet. In addition some of them had long, broad tails. If their "songs" were in proportion to their size, imagine the weird sounds of the swampy jungles on April evenings, 300,000,000 B.C.